

GENERAL ORDERS, }
No. 246. }

WAR DEPARTMENT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, August 13, 1864.

The following "*Rules and Regulations for preventing collisions on the water*," published in General Orders, No. 34, of May 4, 1864, from the Navy Department, will be immediately adopted on all vessels owned or chartered by the Quartermaster's Department of the army:—

The provisions of the following act, "fixing certain rules and regulations for preventing collisions on water," to take effect on the 1st day of September, 1864, are adopted for the Naval service of the United States from this date. As most of the collisions occur from the non-observance of article sixteen, it is particularly enjoined upon commanding officers, in approaching another vessel, to slacken and stop in time to prevent the possibility of collision:

AN ACT fixing certain rules and regulations for preventing collisions on the water.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after September one, eighteen hundred and sixty-four, the following rules and regulations for preventing collisions on the water be adopted in the Navy and the mercantile marine of the United States: *Provided*, That the exhibition of any light on board of a vessel-of-war of the United States may be suspended whenever, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Navy, the commander-in-chief of a squadron, or the commander of a vessel acting singly, the special character of the service may require it:

REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS ON THE WATER.

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PRELIMINARY.

Article 1. In the following rules, every steamship which is under sail, and not under steam, is to be considered a sailing ship; and every steamship which is under steam, whether under sail or not, is to be considered a ship under steam.

RULES CONCERNING LIGHTS.

Lights.

Article 2. The lights mentioned in the following articles, and no others, shall be carried in all weathers between sunset and sunrise.

Lights for steamships.

Article 3. All steam vessels when under weigh shall carry—

(a) At the foremost head, a bright white light, so fixed as to show an uniform and unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of twenty points of the compass, so fixed as to throw the light ten points on each side of the ship, viz: from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on either side, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least five miles.

(b) On the starboard side, a green light, so constructed as to throw an uniform and unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass, so fixed as to throw the light from right

ahead to two points abaft the beam on the starboard side, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least two miles.

(c) On the port side, a red light, so constructed as to show an uniform unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass, so fixed as to throw the light from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on the port side, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least two miles.

(d) The said green and red side lights shall be fitted with inboard screens, projecting at least three feet forward from the light, so as to prevent these lights from being seen across the bow.

Lights for steam-tugs.

Article 4. Steamships, when towing other ships, shall carry two bright white masthead lights vertically, in addition to their side lights, so as to distinguish them from other steamships. Each of these masthead lights shall be of the same construction and character as the masthead lights which other steamships are required to carry.

Lights for sailing ships.

Article 5. Sailing ships under weigh, or being towed, shall carry the same lights as steamships under weigh, with the exception of the white masthead lights, which they shall never carry.

Exceptional lights for small sailing vessels.

Article 6. Whenever, as in the case of small vessels during bad weather, the green and red lights cannot be fixed, these lights shall be kept on deck, on their respective sides of the vessel, ready for instant exhibition, and shall, on the approach of or to other vessels, be exhibited on their respective sides in sufficient time to prevent collision, in such manner as to make them most visible, and so that the green light shall not be seen on the port side, nor the red light on the starboard side.

To make the use of these portable lights more certain and easy, they shall each be painted outside with the color of the light they respectively contain, and shall be provided with suitable screens.

Lights for ships at anchor.

Article 7. Ships, whether steamships or sailing ships, when at

anchor in roadsteads or fairways, shall, between sunset and sunrise, exhibit where it can best be seen, but at a height not exceeding twenty feet above the hull, a white light in a globular lantern of eight inches in diameter, and so constructed as to show a clear uniform and unbroken light visible all around the horizon, and at a distance of at least one mile.

Lights for pilot vessels.

Article 8. Sailing pilot vessels shall not carry the lights required for other sailing vessels, but shall carry a white light at the mast-head, visible all around the horizon, and shall also exhibit a flare-up light every fifteen minutes.

Lights for fishing vessels and boats.

Article 9. Open fishing boats and other open boats shall not be required to carry side lights required for other vessels; but shall, if they do not carry such lights, carry a lantern having a green slide on the one side and a red slide on the other side, and on the approach of or to other vessels, such lantern shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision, so that the green light shall not be seen on the port side, nor the red light on the starboard side. Fishing vessels and open boats when at anchor, or attached to their nets and stationary, shall exhibit a bright white light. Fishing vessels and open boats shall, however, not be prevented from using a flare-up in addition, if considered expedient.

RULES GOVERNING FOG-SIGNALS.

Fog-signals.

Article 10. Whenever there is a fog, whether by day or night, the fog-signals described below shall be carried and used, and shall be sounded at least every five minutes, viz:

(a) Steamships under weigh shall use a steam-whistle, placed before the funnel, not less than eight feet from the deck.

(b) Sailing ships under weigh shall use a fog-horn.

(c) Steamships and sailing ships, when not under weigh, shall use a bell.

STEERING AND SAILING RULES.

Two sailing ships meeting.

Article 11. If two sailing ships are meeting, end on, or nearly end on, so as to involve risk of collision, the helms of both shall be put to port, so that each may pass on the port side of the other.

Two sailing ships crossing.

Article 12. When two sailing ships are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, then, if they have the wind on different sides, the ship with the wind on the port side shall keep out of the way of the ship with the wind on the starboard side, except in the case in which the ship with the wind on the port side is close-hauled, and the other ship free, in which case the latter ship shall keep out of the way. But if they have the wind on the same side, or if one of them has the wind aft, the ship which is to windward shall keep out of the way of the ship which is to leeward.

Two ships under steam meeting.

Article 13. If two ships under steam are meeting end on, or nearly end on, so as to involve risk of collision, the helms of both shall be put to port, so that each may pass on the port side of the other.

Two ships under steam crossing.

Article 14. If two ships under steam are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, the ship which has the other on her own starboard side shall keep out of the way of the other.

Sailing ship and ship under steam.

Article 15. If two ships, one of which is a sailing ship and the other a steamship, are proceeding in such directions as to involve risk of collision, the steamship shall keep out of the way of the sailing ship.

Ships under steam to slacken speed.

Article 16. Every steamship when approaching another ship so as to involve risk of collision, shall slacken her speed, or, if necessary, stop and reverse; and every steamship shall, when in a fog, go at a moderate speed.

Vessels overtaking other vessels.

Article 17. Every vessel overtaking any other vessel shall keep out of way of the said last-mentioned vessel.

Construction of Articles 12, 14, 15, and 17.

Article 18. Where, by the above rules, one of two ships is to keep out of the way, the other shall keep her course, subject to the qualifications contained in the following articles:

Proviso to save special cases.

Article 19. In obeying and construing these rules due regard must be had to all dangers of navigation, and due regard must also be had to any special circumstances which may exist in any particular case rendering the departure from the above rules necessary in order to avoid immediate danger.

No ship under any circumstances to neglect proper precautions.

Article 20. Nothing in these rules shall exonerate any ship, or the owner or master, or crew thereof, from the consequences of any neglect to carry lights or signals, or of any neglect to keep a proper lookout, or of the neglect of any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by the special circumstances of the case.

Approved April 29, 1864.

Should a collision unfortunately take place, each commanding officer is required to furnish the Department with the following information :

1st. His own report, that of the pilot, the officer of the deck, and other officers who witnessed the occurrence. These reports and statements are to be exemplified by a diagram, and must contain the courses steered, the point at which the vessel was first seen, the bearing, the time when the engine was slowed, when the vessel was stopped, whether in motion, and, if so, at what speed at the moment of collision, the direction of the wind, the condition of the weather and atmosphere, what lookouts were placed, what lights were exhibited by both vessels, whether either vessel deviated from the above rules and regulations, whether any blame can attach to any one, and, if so, to whom, and any and all other facts bearing upon the subject.

2. Written statements and estimate of damage from officers of the vessel with which the vessel of the U. S. Navy collided, if they can be obtained.

3. Survey of the injury to both vessels by United States officers.

4. If the vessel is in charge of a pilot, and the collision has occurred from his acting in violation of the above rules and regulations, the fact must be established in the report, and no pilotage paid to him.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR :

E. D. TOWNSEND,

Assistant Adjutant General.

OFFICIAL:

Assistant Adjutant General.

E. D. Townsend
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